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EARTHQUAKE

And Trip to Japan Interestingly Described--Customs of People and other Facts.

[The following letter is from Col. F. P. Firey, of Pomona, Cal., who for years lived with Rev. W. T. Libbs, and is well known by the Cassidy & Trimble families, and was written to Bruce Trimble, editor:]

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN, Nov. 8, '06.
BRUCE W. TRIMBLE,
Mt. Sterling, Ky.

My Dear Bruce: I have been intending from time to time to write you a letter from Japan, and now if you will excuse the use of a pencil I will attempt to write you a few lines before we take our departure from the "Sunrise Kingdom."

You probably have been aware that my wife and I have been touring Japan, as I have occasionally dropped you a postal card to let you know that "we were still alive."

We left our Pomona Cal., home the 17th of July and stopped one day at San Jose to visit Mrs. F.'s sister. At San Jose we first saw evidences of the great earthquake that on the 18th of April laid San Francisco in ashes and ruins. The new Court-house and Hall of Records, but previously completed, was a mass of ruins, being split from foundation to dome, resembling a crushed egg-shell. Two churches were a mass of ruins and their walls thrown out into the streets, and many dwelling houses looked as though they had sunken several feet into the ground, and

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were a mass of ruins and street car

tracks in other parts of the city

were twisted so as to resemble the

tracks of a snake through a dusty

road. "Nob Hill," once adorned

with the palaces of San Francisco's millionaires, was as desolate and thrice more forbidding than the miserable abodes of the former out-casts and beggars. Hundreds of blocks, fully one-half of the city, resembled a burned forest of blackened trunks of once gigantic trees. Beyond the burned district we observed some peculiar freaks of the earthquake. At the corner of Hayes and Fillmore streets is an old brick Catholic church which apparently was not touched by the "quake," while within two blocks was a once beautiful Jewish Synagogue and Temple which had recently been constructed of pressed brick, and was a mass of crushed brick and mortar. I don't know whether the quality of religion had anything to do with the fate of the two structures or not; perhaps our Catholic brethren might have had an opinion on the matter, but I did not have an opportunity to interview any of them in relation thereto. It will take at least twenty-five years to rebuild the city, but the former San Francisco with the spirit of "49" has passed away forever.

We left San Francisco at noon, July 20th, by the Pacific Mail S. S. Mongolia. We reached the dock just as they were ready to haul in the gang plank—in less than five minutes more we would have been just in time to have seen our baggage, containing our finery, sailing away to the Orient and Mrs. F. standing on the dock, bathed in tears, bidding it a sad farewell. Of course I did not expect to meet anyone on board of a steamer bound for so distant foreign port I had ever met before, but as I reached the deck of the vessel I was accosted by my military title by Rev. Dr. Gordon, formerly of Pomona, who was aboard to bid adieu to several Presbyterian missionaries bound for India and Japan.

After passing through the "Golden Gate" all passengers repaired to the dining room for luncheon and had our first meal on board the steamer, which by some in a short time fed to the fishes of the deep. I held on to mine and did not miss a meal the entire trip. We reached

HONOLULU

on the morning of the 6th day from San Francisco, where we went ashore and took in the sights of that flower embowered island city. We secured a carriage and took a drive around the city and over the famous Poli drive which winds up a canyon to the opposite side of the island, which terminates at a precipice that is some several hundred feet to the rocks below. It was over this road and

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over this precipice the first invaders of the island drove some 3000 of the natives, the leader of the invaders then proclaimed himself the first king of the islands. It is said that some of the bones of the unfortunate natives were to be found at the bottom of the precipice until a few years ago. The climate there being the same throughout the year the vegetation does not have the dark green color like we have in California, nor your blue-grass fields in Kentucky, but is of a pale green color such as we have not seen anywhere else. Flowers—roses excepted—are very beautiful, the hibiscus especially growing to perfection, being large and double and 5 to 6 inches in diameter. We left Honolulu in the evening of the day of our arrival, bound for Yokohama, our next port of call. We sailed along day after day through peaceful seas as calm and tranquil as a sea of glass. We would pace the decks, read and sleep. If you are ever troubled with insomnia I would advise you to take a trip across the Pacific which will induce sleep if nothing else will. We arrived at

YOKOHAMA

on the morning of the 6th of August where we got our first sight of these queer people on their native heath. At the pier we got in "jinrikishas" and took our first ride in a vehicle drawn by a human horse. It was a queer sensation to see these brawny, dusky, scantily clad fellows trot off with a pace nearly equaling that of a horse. I am now so accustomed to riding that way for the last four months that I suppose when I return to California it will seem strange to me to drive my own horse, "Buncombe," again. From Yokohama we sailed for China, touching enroute at Kobe, Nagasaki, Shanghai and finally Hong Kong our destination. At Nagasaki we took a "Riksha" ride to Mogi, which is a beautiful drive up and down a beautiful canyon, its sides lined with beautiful bamboo, and every available spot covered with little rice paddys and vegetables. If it's true "that beauty 'unadorned' is 'adorned' the most," then there surely ought to be a great deal of beauty in Japan, for, on our ride to Mogi, I saw more nakedness than I ever beheld in my life; children on every hand were entirely naked and men and women but very little better. You see this everywhere, both in Japan and China. The trip down through the Inland sea, from Kobe to Nagasaki was a grand sight, like unto a dream of fairyland. It is interspersed with hundred and thousands of islands, many small, but many larger and all clothed in green from water's edge to summit and many of them terraced with rice paddys and vegetables.

At Nagasaki we were shown a small rugged island in the harbor from whose summit thousands of Christians were hurled to their death at time of the expulsion of the Christians over 300 years ago. Here all vessels coal going and

coming from the Orient. The coaling is all done by hand; they place ladders and scaffolds to the sides of the vessel upon which the men and women stand from early morn till late at night passing from one to the other baskets made of straw filled with coal. Usually it takes about ten hours to coal a vessel with 1200 tons of coal this way. I saw women with little babes tied on their backs toiling away all day tossing to the next above them. These baskets are filled with coal, containing 10 to 12 pounds. For such labor the woman receive 15c and the men 20 cents per day.

AT SHANGHAI

our vessel anchored at the mouth of the Yankse river and the passengers were conveyed to the city some 18 or 20 miles up the river by a launch, smaller steamers than ours can easily go all the way. The day being Sunday we attended church at the Union-Foreign Church. It was the only time I ever attended church where the men outnumbered the women—there being only 10 or 12 ladies in attendance, the balance being all men, mostly Englishmen. The day was very warm and the church was provided with electric fans

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20-22

and "punkahs," the latter being large fans made of paper suspended on horizontal bars, which are operated by coolies on the outside of the building by a rope which they pull to and fro.

The bund—the street fronting on the water—is very beautiful and is adorned by lawns and shade trees; it is called the Paris of the Orient. It is here that we see the wheelbarrow that is used to convey passengers. It is rather a clumsy affair with a platform extended on each side of the single wooden wheel. I have seen from one to five chinamen sitting on these clumsy wheelbarrows and the coolie trotting along pushing his burden before him and the perspiration streaming from every pore.

We did not try the wheelbarrow as that seemed to be about the "limit" of means of transportation.

We left Shanghai the same evening and after sailing two days and nights down the eastern coast of China, through balmy seas, we arrived at

HONG KONG

on the mornig of the 15th of August, having sailed 7500 miles over seas the entire way as smooth as glass.

Hong Kong is an island 12 by 3 miles and contains some 400,000 inhabitants; 100,000 of whom live in small boats, called sampans. The foreign portion of the city is built on the side of the mountain, the streets, or roads as they call them, run parallel, one above the other very much like steps on a stairway.

The Chinese that live in the small boats on the water must surely have a severe struggle for a living. Their boats are about as large as an ordinary two-horse wagon-bed and yet families of from 6 to 8 live and die in these small dismal quarters.

The chair is the mode of conveyance here the hill being too steep to admit the use of the "Riksha." The chair is suspended between two poles and is carried on the shoulders of two coolies, one in front and the other behind. They are pleasanter to ride in than the "Riksha," only you can't go faster than a walk. Here one sees the Chinese women doing the heaviest and most menial kind of work, such as carrying heavy loads of brick and mortar to the tops of buildings under construction. Here Chinese women, called Amahs, will call daily at your room and offer for sale the most beautiful and exquisitely made linen drawn work at remarkably low prices, and many other articles dear to the feminine heart.

We visited Canton which is 90 miles up the Canton river. This was our first visit to the real heart of a Chinese city. Canton contains over 2,000,000 inhabitants, is over 3000 years old and so dense are the houses and so narrow are the streets that the city does not occupy more space than does Mt. Sterling. The streets of Canton are so narrow that it is with difficulty two chairs can pass each other. The odors in the streets are terrible. We were obliged to have a guide and a runner to go in front to announce "the foreign devils are coming" and to clear the way for our approach.

We visited the Budist temple of 500 Gods all painted in gold lacquer and many of them hideous enough to scare the devil out of a years growth. Two old priests were thumping a drum and chanting a doleful tune that reminded me of the witches of Endor. At the entrance of every house or shop we would see an image or shrine before which they continually burned incense to their Gods. We had our lunch, or "tiffin" as they call it in the Orient, in the

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five storied pagoda which is said to have been built before Christ was on earth. From there we could see the grave-yard which extends for 20 miles in every direction and has been used as such for thousands of years. We visited the "City of the Dead" which contains a number of buildings with numbers of rooms in which persons of wealth place the caskets containing the bodies of their loved ones until they can procure a "good luck" place to bury them. Before each casket they have a bowl of water and a bowl of rice, which is renewed fresh daily and they keep incense burning continually. We visited the old water clock which has been recording time, drop by drop for thousands of years. It is remarkable to see the beautiful hand embroidery these Chinamen can do, and they sell it at prices that would seem like finding it in America. I have seen Chinamen naked to the skin, save only a loin cloth, doing the most delicate carving in Ivory, and to look at them you would scarcely think them capable of whittling a stick, and yet these skilled workmen seldom receive more than 15c per day.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

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